

From our Churches

Author: Michelle Stoesz

Church: Sargent Ave. Mennonite Church

Date: Summer 2006

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-16

This resource is part of a larger **From Our Churches** archives available as an inspirational resource to teachers, ministers and others of Mennonite Church Canada. Posted by permission of the author. Permission to reproduce and distribute is granted.

The Beatitudes – Summer Worship Devotionals

For Families with Young Children

This summer, Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church is focussing on the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes are found in Matthew 5: 3 – 16.

This particular calendar is set up for families with younger children. May you feel God's presence as you work through it together. This may be used in preparation for the Sunday morning worship service. It may also be used as a follow up to the Sunday morning service.

There is the topic for the week. The faith focus is taken right out of the International Children's Bible in a language children can understand. It may be beneficial to learn each verse as a memory verse to work on this summer. Memory verses stay with each individual and something children (all of us) can rely on in times of trouble. You may want to add each verse to a tune you make up or a well known tune. Learning Scripture passages through songs makes it easier and more fun. There are responses or activities to do each week in connection with a particular Beatitude. Have fun with these! Then there are questions to ponder. This may work well for a family discussion (or a mini worship service when on holidays.) There is a prayer suggestion each week. Feel free to add to the prayer. Each page ends with a blessing (use at anytime). Each blessing says "child's name" this means all of us, as we are all children of God.

Many of the ideas for this calendar came from the book *Kids and Blessings: Living the Beatitudes* by Sandi Hannigan and Eleanor Snyder. This was a very helpful book when putting this together.

Have a great summer! May you feel God's presence upon you as you worship together.

Poor in Spirit - June 18, 2006

Faith Focus: Those people who know they have spiritual needs are happy. The kingdom of heaven belongs to them. Matthew 5:3

Scripture: Mark 9: 33 – 37, Psalm 5:1 - 7

Response:

- Paper chain affirmation necklaces – draw or write a word or picture on each link to remind you how much you are loved by God and others
- write about an experience when you felt small
- Plant a special flower that will remind you of your need to rely on God. Just like plants need us to water and tend them, we need God to take care of us.

To Ponder:

- I wonder how the child felt when Jesus took him/her into His arms
- I wonder what other kinds of arguments the disciples had with each other.
- I wonder how the disciples felt when Jesus chose a child as the greatest.
- I wonder how Jesus makes me feel special when I feel small inside.

Prayer: Thank you God for your love when I feel small in side. Amen

Blessing at Bedtime: (child's name), be happy when you feel small inside: God's love is yours.

Mourning - June 25, 2006

Faith Focus: Those who are sad now are happy. God will comfort them. – Be happy when you feel sad: God will help you feel happy. Matthew 5:4

Scripture: John 11:17 – 45, Psalm 30: 1 - 12

Response:

- Paper bag puppet – a way to talk about feelings of sadness. Share your concerns with God
- Make a card for someone who is sad, showing them you and God care about them.
- Write about times when you have been sad and tell God into your thoughts.

To Ponder:

- I wonder why Jesus didn't help Lazarus get better when he was sick?
- I wonder how Mary and Martha felt when Jesus came to their house and put his arms around them when they were sad.
- I wonder how Jesus helps me feel better when I am sad inside.
- I wonder how I can help my friends feel better when they are sad inside.

Prayer: Thank you, God, that you are always with me when I am sad. You help me feel better inside. Amen

Blessing at Bedtime: Be happy (child's name), when you feel sad inside; God will help you feel better.

Gentleness - July 2, 2006

Faith Focus: Those who are humble are happy. The earth will belong to them. Matthew 5:5

Passage: John 10: 1 – 18, Psalm 5

Response:

- Nature Walk – look at the insects and birds around you – treat with gentleness. Enjoy God's creation. Go on a nature scavenger hunt. Find different things (e.g. pebble, twig, blade of grass, insect, dandelion, feather, garbage, pinecone, leaf)
- Observe Nature – How are the trees different from each other?
- Nature rubbings – Put a piece of paper on top of a leaf (vein side up) and then colour on the paper. How are the leaves different?

To Ponder:

- I wonder how the sheep felt to be loved and cared for by such a gentle shepherd.
- I wonder how the young or weak sheep felt when the shepherd carried them in his arms.
- I wonder how Jesus is our good shepherd.
- I wonder how we can be gentle like Jesus.

Prayer: Thank you God for everything you have made. Help us to be gentle with your creation. Amen

Blessing at Bedtime: Be happy (child's name), when you are gentle, the earth is yours.

Justice - July 9, 2005

Faith Focus: Those who want to do right more than anything else are happy. God will fully satisfy them. Matthew 5:6

Scripture: Luke 14: 7 – 14, Psalm 36

Response:

- Have a family “Happy Unbirthday” Party (have a birthday party for everyone, but it is no one's real birthday. It is by doing this that it will be fair for all and everyone will experience joy in that. Showing hospitality to each other in your family.
- Balloon bounce – keep balloon up in the air with different parts of your body and everyone working together.
- Invite someone to your house to get to know them better and show them kindness.

To Ponder:

- I wonder how the people felt who didn't usually get invited to parties when they ate with the king.
- I wonder how the king felt to see them enjoying the party.
- I wonder how I can treat everyone with kindness, even the people who aren't my closest friends.

Prayer: Thank you God, that you love all of us the same. Help us to treat each other in right ways. Amen.

Blessing at Bedtime: Be happy when you hunger and thirst for justice; (child's name), you will have your fill.

God's People Now - July 16, 2006
Scripture: I Peter 2:9 – 10, Psalm 135: 1 – 7

Focus: God calls, equips and sends the church to spread the gospel of Christ.

Response:

- Plan a picnic with friends – Call friends and make sure you have everything you need (equip). After the picnic send everyone home with a blessing.
- Go on the internet...How many different places are missionaries from Mennonite Church Canada serving in? What kinds of service are they involved in?
www.mennonitechurch.ca/programs/witness/international/

To Ponder:

- How do I tell others about God?
- How can I serve God right where I am?

Prayer: Thank you God that I am one of “God's People” now! Thank you for my questions. Help me to learn more about you and our church. Amen

- Thank God for the many people who tell others about God and live in a way of the “upside-down kingdom” (opposite from the way the world operates).
- Pray for Cliff and Natasha Dueck as they serve in the Ukraine. Pray for Conrad Stoesz as he serves the church through the archives.

Blessing at Bedtime: May God grant you a blessing and may you bless others.

Kindness - July 23, 2006

Faith Focus: Those who give mercy to others are happy. Mercy will be given to them.
Matthew 5:7

Scripture: Matthew 18:25 – 35, Psalm 102: 1-2

Response:

- Go for a walk and practice taking care of the environment – God's creation. (e.g. collect garbage, weed flowerbeds, plant flowers)
- Assemble a health and/or school kit for MCC
- Help mom and dad with jobs around the house – do it together (show kindness like your parents and God show to you)

To Ponder:

- I wonder how the servant felt when the king forgave him.
- I wonder why the servant didn't show kindness to the other servant who owed him some money.
- I wonder how I can show kindness to others.

Prayer: Thank you God for your kindness to us. Help us to be kind to others. Amen.

Blessing at Bedtime: Be happy (child's name), when you show kindness to others. God's kindness will be shown to you.

Pure in heart - July 30, 2006

Faith Focus: Those who are pure in their thinking are happy. They will be with God.

Matt. 5:8

Scripture: Matthew 17:1 – 8, Luke 6: 12 – 13, Psalm 24: 3 - 6

Response:

- When you watch a movie/TV show talk about whether this is a show with pure thinking. What would God think about the TV program?
- Have a cup of water. It is pure. Then add food colouring to the water. What happens. What happens if you add more colouring? That is how it is with a pure heart. Our hearts need to stay pure or they will discolour/be contaminated. Can you change the water back to it's original state?
- We can learn a lot about people by talking to them, invite an older person over for a visit. We can help each other to be pure in heart.

To Ponder:

- I wonder what it means to have a clean heart.
- I wonder how we "see God".
- I wonder how I can have a clean heart. What do I need to change?

Prayer: Blessed be God. You have not rejected my prayer. You have not stopped loving me. Thank you, God. Amen

Blessing at Bedtime: (child's name), go with a clean heart, for you are loved by God.

Peacemakers - August 6, 2006

Faith Focus: Those who work to bring peace are happy. God will call them his children. Matthew 5:9

Scripture: John 8: 1 – 11, Psalm 3

Response:

- Plant a seed for a flower and watch the beauty come from planting and working for something special.
- What do TV shows have to say about peace and peaceful ways of living?
- Find and decorate a stone. Where would you place your peace stone to remind you to work for peace?
- Name places where violence is evident in your immediate world and the broader world.

To Ponder:

- I wonder how the woman felt when Jesus saved her from being stoned to death.
- I wonder what I would have done with the stone.
- I wonder what I would have done if I were in Jesus' place.
- How can I work at finding alternative solutions to violence.

Prayer: Give strength to your people, God. Bless your people with peace. (Ps. 29:11). Children of God, walk with joy on the path to peace.

- Pray for courage and creativity to work for peace in homes, communities, and around the world.

Blessing at Bedtime: (child's name), child of God, go and work for peace.

Persecuted - August 13, 2006

Faith Focus: Those who are treated badly for doing good are happy. The kingdom of heaven belongs to them. Matthew 5:10 - 12

Scripture: Acts 4:1 – 22, Psalm 56

Response:

- When have people teased or made fun of you (e.g. called name, bullied)?
Journal/brainstorm creative nonviolent active ways to respond.
- Role-play someone being bullied. Talk about it as a family.
- Draw a picture with crayons then colour it all black and scratch it with a penny.
Or paint the whole page black with a black wash (watered down paint) to have the colours show through. There is hope and joy if we trust and love God.

To Ponder:

- I wonder if Jesus meant for us to follow His rules
- I wonder how I can love a person who hurts me.
- I wonder if I can find “upside down” ways to respond to someone who is mean to me.

Prayer: Caring God, thank you that you love and care about us when we are sad.
Amen.

Blessing at Bedtime: (child's name), this is God's promise for you: you will always be a part of God's love, no matter what.

Salt Of The Earth - August 20, 2006

Faith Focus: You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its salty taste, it cannot be made salty again. It is good for nothing. It must be thrown out for people to walk on. Matthew 5:13

Scripture: Mark 9: 49 – 50, Psalm 146

Response:

- Mix food colouring with sugar or salt. Make a design out of glue then sprinkle the salt over top of the glue. Make a wonderful picture.
- Make bread which needs the salt and sugar combination. We need Jesus in order to give our lives peace and joy.

To Ponder:

- How can I be salt of the earth? What does that mean?
- How can I season my life more with the blessings of Jesus?
- How can I purify my life with Jesus' help?
- How can I preserve my friendship with Jesus?

Prayer: Thank you that you, Jesus, are with us as we use our special gifts in the world around us.

Blessing at Bedtime: (child's name), Jesus' love will surround you.

Light to the World- August 27, 2006

Faith Focus: You are the light that gives light to the world. A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden. And people don't hide a light under a bowl. They put the light on a lamp stand. Then the light shines for all the people in the house. In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do. Live so that they will praise your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5: 14 - 16

Scripture: Luke 8: 16 – 18, Psalm 67

Response:

- Light a candle, then use a snuffer. If we hide our light no one sees it and it goes out. Let others see in you the love and joy of Jesus.
- Look at the sunlight making a rainbow through a prism. God has given us all unique gifts, they are all "different colours". Enjoy the colours/gifts God has given us.
- Light a candle each day for supper – to remind us to be God's light to the world.

To Ponder:

- What does it mean to be the light of the earth?
- Who are the friends around me that keep my "light" for Jesus going?
- How can I keep my light shining? What do I need to do? Do I need to change anything to help my light shine?

Prayer: Jesus we thank you for your blessings this summer. We thank you for your Word, in the Bible, and your loving kindness. Thank you. Amen.

Blessing at Bedtime: (child's name), Jesus will be with you.